



BORDERS AND LANGUAGES

Borders are clear demarcating lines on a map that separates countries and languages into clearly identified units. However, when we begin to bring together and collapse borders, new possibilities open up. This activity invites participants to explore what happens with languages when countries/regions are closer to one another and borders are less fixed.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to take a sheet of tracing paper and a sharpie pen to draw the outline of a country or a region on the map.
2. Moving their sheet to another region or country on the map, participants should draw the outline of a second country (host country, country of birth, country they would like to visit). The two country outlines should be linked together and the separating line could be completely erased so the participants end up with one outline including both countries/regions.
3. Now, ask participants to think and write about the language changes that we might expect if the two countries were adjacent and the separating border would not exist.

NOTE

Multilingual participants could be encouraged to think about what happened with their language knowledge because this imaginary leap of bringing countries/regions together is already part of their daily experience. While countries may not physically move, multilingual learners do cross borders and experience the effects of merging life and language experiences from different places.



MATERIALS NEEDED

For this activity, you will need the following materials:

- a large world map and pins/sticky tape to unroll and display the map on a wall
- tracing sheets for each participant
- Sharpie pens for tracing the outline of the countries/regions

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

The group or class could cut out their country outlines and merge them to create a different world map that reflects the participants and the experiences they bring together. Visualizing the world in this new way allows participants to question the separating role of the borders and to reflect on experiences of mobility and change.

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<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/gc/creativepracticestranslang/>

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